

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 5B

DENVER POST (CO)
18 SEPTEMBER 1981

Tafoya Asks for Reduction of \$500,000 Bond

BY KIT MINICLIER

Denver Post Staff Writer

FORT COLLINS — In trying to show he shot a Libyan student only in self defense last year, Eugene Tafoya said Thursday a man of his extensive military training wouldn't bungle an attempt to kill. A soldier trained in a "ding-dong school" might have bungled such a mission, he said.

Tafoya announced he was broke, made a plea for reduction of his \$500,000 bond and said he won't be convicted.

The former Green Beret refrained from repeating allegations made Wednesday that he had come to Fort Collins on assignment from the Central Intelligence Agency to deliver a message to Libyan dissident Faisal Zagallai, who survived the shooting.

However he repeated earlier contentions "there is an eyewitness account" to the shooting.

NO QUESTIONS were permitted during his 10-minute statement to newsmen inside the heavily guarded Larimer County Jail. In his second meeting with newsmen in two days, the balding, bearded, 47-year-old ex-combat veteran questioned how a trained Special Forces man would bungle an assassination attempt:

"A Special Forces man, let's assume trained in weapons, demolition and things like this, who was out to get a person... if he was out to get a person and used this method I would have to say that he was trained in a ding-dong school."

"I don't think I was..."

TAFOYA WAS arrested at his home in New Mexico on April 22. An affidavit filed by the Fort Collins police said Tafoya was "suspected of being a mercenary soldier who is available to be hired and paid to kill human beings."

He is awaiting trial for attempting to murder Zagallai on Oct. 14, 1980, in Fort Collins. Zagallai, a 35-year-old graduate student at Colorado State University, had expressed fears for his life because of his political differences with Libyan leader Moammar Khadafy.

"It is a matter of record that Zagallai says he supports the Palestine Liberation Organization," Tafoya said Thursday. "I would like to make it public that I support the United States."

TAFOYA TWICED denied reports he had money stashed away in Swiss bank accounts, or anywhere else, challenging anyone to find "one more cent other than what I have put down in my statements."

"I'd like to see a bond set that I can live with. I will not run. I will not escape, and if any of you are familiar with my war record, I have never run from anyone — not from the enemy and especially not from a case that doesn't have a hand to stand on."

"There are so many things I'd like to cover, being as there is a captive audience here, and really go into... all I can say is beware and protect your constitutional rights."

GLANCING OCCASIONALLY at a sheaf of notes written on yellow legal pads, Tafoya declined to discuss links between himself and former CIA agent Edwin Wilson, whom he said Wednesday had recruited him to go to Libya to help train Libyan Army troops.

"Now getting to this Wilson and all this super stuff. That story will be coming out and I feel that the truth will eventually come out."

"The real thing that is the issue right here, now, is the constitutional aspect of this case. How anyone in the world can justify holding a man in my financial condition for half a million dollars. If anyone can justify (such a bond) morally,

ethically or legally I'd like to see them do it. It is wrong."

PRISONERS, Tafoya said, are "being penalized for being poor. I think it is a pretty frightening aspect. George Orwell's 1984 'Big Brother is watching you' no doubt has become a reality."

Tafoya, from Truth or Consequences, N.M., said he had spoken to the American Civil Liberties Union regarding a possible class-action suit, "which would help out not only myself but other people in similar situations who have such outrageous bonds."

Twice Tafoya apologized for granting a interview Wednesday that was limited to three news organizations, explaining that he had kept his silence for five months on the advice of lawyers. "Things have changed radically and I think it is about time the voice of the turtle is heard."

As Tafoya walked into the jail's sparse recreation room, which had the acoustics of an echo chamber, cameras began clicking, filling the room with sound akin to a Chinese New Year celebration.

"Me and Bo Derek," he said, acknowledging the whirring and snapping of motorized shutters.